

**Please accept my testimony for Appropriations
Committee
Health Subcommittee
February 24, 2022**

**Public Hearing on:
House Bill 5037 AAC the State Budget for the
Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
(Department of Mental Health and Addiction
Services)**

Hello. My name is Aurora. I am a socially suffering chronic relaper, and a victim of poor discharge planning. The lack of interest shown by a drug/alcohol programs discharge planner when it comes to my survival has led to become the unnecessary pre-cursor to a life of lonely drunkenness that leaves me cold, lonely, homeless, and consistently hospitalized. This has happened to me 13 times so I know this horrific result isn't due to one isolated incident. This leads me to believe that the after-care portion of one's treatment has been thrown on the laps of staff that is not properly trained in this vital subject and is of little importance when in fact it is of the most importance for a clients survival. This is why I believe there are many resources essential to help make a clients treatment enhanced and are very beneficial; that in the ripple effect of things will help the staff be able to become more involved with a clients dismissal plans. However, This is Perception house and being that this house runs solely on donations, they do not have the benefits of a "franchise" program that receives funding from other sources.

I was a client at P-house 2 years ago because I was mandated by my probation officer. I was a horrible client and didn't really care about my behavior, my sobriety, or respect. I thought this place was a punishment more than a privilege. Upon entering, I saw a resident talking on a broken phone with a tangled wire while another client swept around her with a broken broom that probably lost 100 bristles.

in its time here. I was then given a rickety old laundry basket with the bare minimum of hygiene supplies and told there was no clothing donations on the premises due to lack of shelving needed to hold such clothes. At lunch time I couldn't help but notice all the broken cabinets and cook and kitchenware not to mention the lame picnic tables that were to eat at while they clearly belong outdoors. After eating I curiously moseyed out to the carriage house that holds meetings and is used for hobbies and to watch movies and listen to music. To my disappointment, the DVDs were all outdated, there was no recovery, DVD's, broken wines resided where a game system of some sort once lived. Any hobby supplies were reduced to dried up paint and broken crayons. No writing paper or printing instruments are introduced. A make shift gym has been shoved in a corner and consists of manly jail weights. All of this is extremely discouraging and I wanted to run out the front doors in tears. The daytime groups were lacking. The curriculum ran short of the materials needed to expand a clients treatment and overall experience here. After a dinner that has been cooked by one of my peers, one that has never cooked a day in her life, we had to do our chores. The cleaning closet consisted of broken brooms, busted mop buckets, old dirty mop heads, and spray bottles that contained an inch of poor cleaner topped with 10 inches of tapwater. Old sponges and non grease removal dish soap-

sit amongst the pans of evening dishes as the S.O.S. pads (that have seen better days) drip rust down the side of the stainless steel sink basin. I know this all sounds bad, but it is a bittersweet understatement and is not completely fair to the women who are dying to get sober. Literally.

It is now 2 years later and I am of no belonging to the court system and I can honestly say that I am extremely passionate about saving my life and coming back to Perception house for the right reason this time. Unfortunately, it is sad to see that it is still in the same condition as when I left 2 yrs. ago. This place to me is a place where I feel comfortable where I've been able to get all my medications right and Staff makes sure I make and attend all my important outside appointments. and the staff that has been here for years are awesome! Its sad that P. house doesn't have the funding needed to boost the recovery curriculum during the day. Well, I was just asked to write a letter today on how I think Perception House could use some funding.

Well, first I think new books and DVDs on sobriety are important. Workbooks, notebooks, binders, and everything needed to organize a client's recovery notes, homework, essays, letters, etc will help someone feel more involved. New electronics are much needed to listen to music on downtime and meditation music to relax. New DVDs that are updated for a movie night after a hard week of recovery based grinding. Welcome baskets that include all hygiene products, towels, robes, slippers. Remember, we all come from jail or the streets and we want to feel how good

it feels to be clean! New dining room tables that aren't broken, awkward, and give you splinters on occasion. Kitchen cabinets that don't fall on the ground when you open them and to be filled with new kitchenware and utensils to be able to whip up great healthy fare. Art supplies that we can have our own personal bucket full this way one person doesn't leave paints open and steal pens or break paint brushes. We can be responsible for our own supply because Art is important. Money for proper cleaning supplies to render this house COVID friendly. New vacuum, mop buckets, mops, brooms, rug cleaner. New floors are needed badly. New dryers and washers. Shelling for donations. Gift cards should be available to clients such as I that didn't qualify for any even though I'm penniless. A private phone area with a new phone would be great! I have phone anxiety and want use it because there are so many people walking by when I'm talking to someone important and it's distracting. Some outdoor furniture and gym supplies would be great. Money for Friday trips, pizza parties, specialty classes such as Yoga, Self esteem boosting, cooking classes, educational groups, etc, parenting classes, child reunification classes. Emergency Over the counter medications are much needed. Grief and loss specialist as well as discharge specialist. Please consider blessing this house with the things that it needs to pass that blessing to others. It is a blessing to me right now. I hope you can aid this house to have the ability to help us chase our dreams to be the amazing mothers, sisters, wives, and friends that we were originally born to be. Thank You. Positively Yours.

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